

XXVI.—*Preliminary Descriptions of a new Genus and of five new Species of Central Australian Birds.* By ALFRED J. NORTH, F.L.S., Australian Museum, Sydney.

PROFESSOR W. BALDWIN SPENCER, of the University of Melbourne, has kindly sent me for examination a number of bird-skins collected in Central Australia during the visit of the Horn Expedition in May, June, and July of last year. Among them are examples of the rare Parrakeet *Polytelis alexandrae* and of five species new to science.

Full descriptions, together with a list of all the birds procured, and accompanied with field-notes by the collector, Mr. George Arthur Kearland, will be published in a volume detailing the work and results of the expedition.

Order PSITTACI.

SPATHOPTERUS, gen. n.

Polyteles, Gould, Proc. Zool. Soc. 1863, p. 232 (part.).



Portion of wing of *Spathopterus alexandrae*, nat. size.

(This figure, reproduced from a drawing kindly made by my colleague, Mr. Edgar R. Waite, F.L.S., will give ornithologists a better idea of this extraordinary new genus of Parrakeets than a long and minutely detailed description.)

Generic Characters.

Adult male. Similar to that of the genus *Polytelis*, except in having the end of the third primary of each wing singularly elongated and terminating in a spatule. Length of spatulate tip 0·75 inch; beyond the end of the second primary 0·5 inch.

Adult female. Destitute of spatules.

Type. S. ALEXANDRÆ (Gould); Salvad. Cat. B. Brit. Mus. xx. p. 477.

Range. Central Australia.

RHIPIDURA ALBICAUDA, sp. n.

Adult male. Like *R. albiscapa*, but differing from that species in having all but the two centre tail-feathers pure white, narrowly edged with blackish brown on the basal half of the outer webs of all the feathers except the outermost one on either side. Total length 5·8 inches, wing 2·8, tail 3·5, bill from gape 0·45, tarsus 0·62.

The sexes are alike in plumage.

Hab. Stokes Pass, Central Australia.

Obs. This specimen has probably barely attained its adult livery, for in a female obtained on the Levi Range the *two* outermost tail-feathers on either side are pure white.

XEROPHILA NIGRICINCTA, sp. n.

Adult female. Like *X. pectoralis*, from Port Augusta, but distinguished by having the breast crossed by a narrow black band, instead of a broad and well-defined band of cinnamon-brown across the chest, as in that species. Total length 3·9 inches, wing 2·2, tail 1·7, bill from gape 0·45, tarsus 0·68.

The sexes are alike in plumage.

Hab. Missionary Plain, Central Australia.

PTILOTIS KEARTLANDI, sp. n.

Adult male. General colour above pale greyish brown, slightly tinged with olive-yellow, and gradually passing into grey on the crown of the head and buff on the rump; upper tail-coverts more distinctly tinged with olive-yellow; primaries, secondaries, and their coverts brown, strongly washed with bright olive-yellow on their outer webs, the median series of the greater wing-coverts slightly tinged with buff; lesser wing-coverts brown washed with grey; tips of secondaries and the outer webs of the three longest primaries towards their tips narrowly edged with dull ashy white; tail-feathers brown externally, washed with bright olive-yellow, and all but the two centre tail-feathers having dull

whitish tips; a line in front and the feathers above and below the eye blackish; ear-coverts silky grey, slightly tipped with blackish brown; extending behind, and partially concealed by the posterior and lower corner of the ear-coverts, a conspicuous patch of bright yellow feathers; cheeks, chin, throat, and all the under surface pale lemon-yellow, becoming slightly darker on the centre of the throat and fore-neck, each feather of the latter and those on the sides of the breast having a narrow indistinct line of brown down the centre; thighs brown; under tail-coverts pale lemon-yellow; under wing-coverts and inner margins of primaries pale fulvous; bill blackish brown; legs and feet fleshy brown. Total length 5·6 inches, wing 3·13, tail 2·2, bill from gape 0·7, tarsus 0·8.

The sexes are alike in plumage.

Hab. McMinn's Range, Central Australia.

This very distinct species of *Ptilotis* I have named after Mr. George Arthur Keartland, whose assiduity and perseverance as ornithological collector contributed so much to the success of the expedition.

CLIMACTERIS SUPERCILIOSA, sp. n.

Adult male. Like the male of *C. erythrops*, but differing from that species in having a smaller bill; the crown of the head greyish brown instead of blackish brown; the band through the wing rich buff instead of pale greyish buff; the ear-coverts greyish black streaked with white instead of uniform greyish brown; and the orbital region and superciliary stripes pure white instead of rusty red. Total length 5·7 inches, wing 3·55, tail 2·55, bill from forehead 0·6, from gape 0·73, tarsus 0·73.

Adult female. Like the male in colour, but having the white superciliary stripes margined above by narrower lines of rusty red and the feathers on the centre and lower part of the fore-neck dull white edged with pale rusty red. Total length 5·7 inches, wing 3·4, tail 2·5, bill from forehead 0·6, from gape 0·73, tarsus 0·73.

Hab. Illara Creek, Central Australia.

TURNIX LEUCOGASTER, sp. n.

Adult female. General colour above chestnut-brown, each feather being more or less broadly margined with buffy white; bases of the feathers on the top of the head black, their inner webs whitish, forming a conspicuous stripe down the centre of the head; nape and hind-neck pale chestnut-brown, each feather being submarginally edged on either side with a narrow line of black; scapulars, back, rump, and upper tail-coverts and tail more distinctly lined with black, and having three or more irregularly shaped cross-bars on each feather, the scapulars being broadly margined with buffy white and having a spot of ochraceous brown near the tips; primaries, secondaries, and primary-coverts blackish grey; outer web of the first primary and edge of the wing white, the remainder narrowly edged with buff, also the tips of outer webs of secondaries and inner webs and tips of primary-coverts; tertiaries like the scapulars, but having three irregularly shaped white spots on the outer webs of the two longest feathers; remainder of the wing-coverts light red, broadly edged with pale buff and marbled with black near their tips, the lesser coverts slightly duller and more broadly tipped with black; lores and superciliary stripes white tipped with pale chestnut; feathers below the eye, sides of the face and neck, white with blackish tips; chin and throat white; fore-neck pale buff; sides of the chest dull chestnut-red, tipped with pale buff, and gradually becoming darker on the sides of the breast, where the feathers are submarginally edged with black near their tips; remainder of the under surface and under tail-coverts dull white: bill bluish horn-colour; legs and feet yellowish white. Total length 5·2 inches, wing 2·9, tail 1·3, bill 0·47, tarsus 0·7.

Hab. Davenport Creek, Central Australia.

This new species of *Turnix* is allied to *T. velox* and to *T. pyrrhotorax*, but the almost uniform white under-surface will serve to distinguish it from either, and from every member of the genus yet discovered in Australia.